E/1994/39
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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

REPORT ON THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION
29 - 31 May 1994

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS: 1994

SUPPLEMENT No. 19

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present report, which covers the activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) since its sixteenth session, held in Amman from 30 August to 3 September 1992, was adopted unanimously by the Commission at its 5th meeting, held in Amman on 31 May 1994.

I. ISSUES CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

2. At its 5th plenary meeting, held on 31 May 1994, the Commission adopted a number of resolutions and decided to submit them for action by the Economic and Social Council or to bring them to its attention. The following are their texts:

A. ISSUES CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

196 (XVII). Frequency of sessions of the Commission and the Technical Committee[1]

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling its resolution 158 (XIV) of 5 April 1987 on the holding of the sessions of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on a biennial basis,

Recalling also its resolution 178 (XVI) of 2 September 1992, on the frequency of sessions of the Technical Committee, in which it was decided that the session of the Technical Committee would be held in the years when no Commission session was held,

Convinced of the benefit of continuity of the sessions of the Commission and the Technical Committee, of their being held consecutively in one period, and of the need for the sessions of the Commission to be held in odd years, in conformity with the budget sessions of the United Nations system and the cycle to monitor the progress achieved in the programmes of work of the system,

Taking into consideration the terms of reference of the Technical Committee, as stated in Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/64 of 30 July 1982 on the establishment of a Standing Committee for the Programme of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, and in Council resolution 1984/80 of 27 July 1984 on the general policy-making structure of the Economic Commission for Western Asia,

1. *Decides* that the meetings of the Technical Committee shall henceforth be linked with the sessions of the Commission, in accordance with previous practice, and that the Technical Committee shall hold its meeting shortly before the Commission session;

2. *Decides also* that Commission sessions shall be held in odd years, starting in 1995, in conformity with the budget session of the United Nations and with the cycle to monitor the progress achieved in the programmes of work of the system;

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[1] The Technical Committee adopted this resolution at its eighth session for submission to the Commission at its seventeenth session.

3. *Reaffirms* its request to the Executive Secretary, in paragraph 2(a) of resolution 158 (XIV) to prepare a detailed report on the activities, plans, and programmes of the Commission for submission to the Economic and Social Council in those years when no session is held.

5th plenary meeting
31 May 1994

197 (XVII). The permanent headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling its resolution 192 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on the permanent headquarters of the Commission and Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/3 of 2 February 1993,

Taking into account the report of the Executive Secretary submitted to the Commission at its seventeenth session pursuant to resolution 192 (XVI) as well as the debate conducted and procedures followed in the closed meeting of the heads of delegation for the selection of the host country of the permanent headquarters,[2]

1. *Expresses deep appreciation* to the Government of Iraq for hosting the headquarters of the Commission in past years;

2. *Also expresses deep appreciation* to the Government of Jordan for its support and cooperation in providing facilities and assistance for the temporary headquarters of the Commission;

3. *Expresses deep appreciation* to the Government of Jordan and the Government of Qatar for their offers to host the permanent headquarters of the Commission;

4. *Decides*, having considered and subsequently accepted the offer of the Government of Lebanon, to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that the permanent headquarters of the Commission be relocated to Beirut;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To approach the Government of Lebanon, as soon as the appropriate legal action has been taken by the United Nations with regard to paragraph 4 above, in order to arrive at a common understanding of all issues and commitments relating to the relocation of the permanent headquarters, to conclude a Headquarters Agreement and to agree upon a suitable timetable and the necessary arrangements for the relocation of the permanent headquarters to Beirut in such a way as to ensure that the requirements for the proper functioning of the Commission are met;

(b) To take all steps necessary to effect the transfer of the permanent headquarters in accordance with the present resolution;

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[2] For details of the debate, see paragraphs 124 to 135 of the present report.

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its eighteenth session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

5th plenary meeting
31 May 1994

198 (XVII). Establishment of a committee on social development within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to its resolutions 182 (XVI) on the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Decade for Western Asia (1994-2003), 186 (XVI) on preparations for the International Year of the Family, 1994, 187 (XVI) on the World Summit for Social Development, 188 (XVI) on preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, and 189 (XVI) on the Arab Population Conference, 1993,

Cognizant of the importance of coordinating social development activities at the regional level and related issues in the areas of human development, population, human settlements and local communities, the family and the advancement of women in Western Asia, in accordance with the conditions, cultural realities and social structure of the States of the region and their economic and social development needs,

Conscious of the importance of increasing the participation of the competent authorities of the member States of the Commission in the planning and development of the secretariat's programmes in the ESCWA social field and the definition of priorities for social plans and programmes.

Inspired by the steps taken by other United Nations regional commissions for the establishment of specialized committees on social development to assume responsibility for coordinating action in their regions,

Cognizant also of the need to strengthen coordination and integration between the Commission and Arab regional organizations on the social development policies, programmes and activities of organizations with a view to satisfying the needs of the member States and developing them for the purposes of the comprehensive development of the States of the region,

1. *Decides* to establish a committee on social development, made up of representatives of the ESCWA member States, to assume the following tasks:

(a) Participation in the establishment and formulation of priorities for the programme of work and priorities and medium-term plans in social development fields;

(b) Monitoring of the progress achieved in social programmes and activities in the ESCWA member States and preparation of the necessary recommendations for strengthening the social development process in those States;

(c) Follow-up of international and regional conferences, participation of member States in them, and coordination of regional efforts relating to the implementation of resolutions and recommendations;

(d) Definition of focal points to coordinate various social activities together with the secretariat and monitor their execution;

2. *Decides also* that, starting in 1995, the committee on social development shall hold its meetings every two years;

3. *Invites* the Executive Secretary to follow up the implementation of the present resolution and report thereon to the Commission at its eighteenth session.

5th plenary meeting
31 May 1994

B. ISSUES BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL[3]

199 (XVII). Medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

200 (XVII). Draft revision of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995

201 (XVII). Proposed outline of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997

202 (XVII). The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

203 (XVII). Follow-up of the decisions and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Regional Preparatory Meeting and of the Fourth World Conference on Women

[3] The texts of these resolutions may be found in chapter IV of the present report.

II. WORK OF THE COMMISSION SINCE THE SIXTEENTH SESSION

A. Activities of subsidiary bodies

3. The Standing Committee for the Programme was established as the main subsidiary organ of the Commission by virtue of Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA)[4] resolution 114 (IX) of 12 May 1982 on the ECWA medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989. By virtue of ECWA resolution 125 (XI) of 26 April 1984 on the general policy-making structure of the Commission, the Standing Committee for the Programme was designated the Technical Committee and vested with additional terms of reference, among which were the examination of items on the agenda of the sessions of the Commission. The Technical Committee held its eighth session from 11 to 13 October 1993 at the Commission's temporary headquarters in Amman. By virtue of ESCWA resolution 179 (XVI) of 2 September 1992, a second subsidiary body of ESCWA, the Statistics Committee, was created and will hold meetings biennially as of 1995.

B. Other activities

4. Pursuant to resolution 175 (XVI) of 18 May 1989 on the strengthening of the role and performance of ESCWA, an Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives comprising the heads of diplomatic missions of the member States at the Commission's headquarters was established and met periodically during 1989 and 1990. After the regrouping of the staff of the secretariat in Amman in 1991, the Advisory Committee, represented by the heads of the diplomatic missions in Jordan, held a number of meetings, the last of which took place in Amman on 12 May 1994. ESCWA intends to intensify consultations with this body with a view to strengthening its role.

5. The report of the Executive Secretary on the progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993 covers all the activities of ESCWA during the period since its sixteenth session.[5]

C. Relations with specialized agencies and other organizations

6. The ESCWA secretariat has continued to strengthen its relations with the specialized agencies, other organizations of the United Nations system and the regional organizations.

7. With the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ESCWA has continued its active cooperation by executing UNDP-funded projects. These included development projects in the areas of investment in industry and in engineering, infrastructure industries, biogas technologies, environmentally sound low-cost housing and fellowships in the field of planning.

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[4] The Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) was redesignated the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia by Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985.

[5] See E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I) and Add.1-10 and E/ESCWA/17/4(Part II).

8. ESCWA also cooperated with UNDP in the organization of an interregional symposium on the development and exploitation of natural gas and market prospects to the beginning of the twenty-first century.

9. A regional seminar on motivation, orientation and training techniques for enhancing industrial entrepreneurship in the ESCWA region was held in Amman from 20 to 25 April 1992 in cooperation with ESCWA, UNDP and the Jordan Institute on Management. A "Start Your Own Business" regional workshop for training of trainers was held in Cairo from 23 October to 10 November 1993 in cooperation with UNDP and the Training Institute of the Arab Contractors Company.

10. With regard to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), ESCWA has continued its cooperation in the field of modern biotechnology. ESCWA has also continued its cooperation in the work on prospects for the substitution of ozone-depleting substances in the ESCWA region: an expert group meeting on the subject was held in Amman on 1 and 2 December 1993. ESCWA also cooperated with UNEP and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in a regional project on the assessment of water resources using remote-sensing techniques.

11. Within the context of promoting regional and interregional cooperation in the water sector, ESCWA organized the Regional Symposium on Water Use and Conservation, held in Amman from 28 November to 2 December 1993. The Symposium was attended by representatives of ESCWA member countries, representatives of other interested countries, such as Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia, and experts from Arab and United Nations entities active in the water sector.

12. A Steering Committee had been established with the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/Regional Office for Science and Technology for the Arab States (UNESCO/ROSTAS) to coordinate various water activities such as projects on remote sensing, sea water intrusion, a water atlas for the Arab world and other relevant regions. In addition, an agreement on cooperation in the fields of desertification and natural resources which covered land, water and plant resources was concluded between ESCWA and ACSAD in 1993.

13. ESCWA took part in the 1st meeting of the Inter-agency Task Force on Land and Water Resources, organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Egypt on 22 February 1993 with the objective of discussing the modalities of cooperation and coordination among United Nations organizations and the Arab regional agencies.

14. Close cooperation continued with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). An agreement between the FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNEA), ESCWA and the Near East North Africa Regional Agricultural Credit Association (NENARACA) was signed concerning the preparation and publication of a textbook on agricultural credit which could be used in Arab universities. Close cooperation between ESCWA and FAO continued through the joint ESCWA/FAO Agriculture Division. With regard to technical assistance projects, ESCWA executed, in cooperation with FAO, a project on the Second Arab Conference on Perspectives of Modern Biotechnology (together with UNEP) and a project on the preparation of a policy framework and regional programme of action for women in agriculture in the Near East.

15. A memorandum of understanding for collaboration and coordination between ESCWA and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) was signed in 1993.

16. With regard to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), ESCWA is involved in cooperative activities through its participation in the Organizing Committee for the ITU World Telecommunication Forum.

17. The ESCWA/UNCTAD/TRAINMAR Workshop on Multimodal Transport for Senior Officials was held in Amman from 25 to 27 January 1993.

18. A meeting of experts on unemployment in ESCWA countries was organized in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and was held in Amman from 26 to 29 July 1993.

19. In the field of population, ESCWA cooperated with the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in organizing the Arab Population Conference, and close contacts were maintained with UNFPA and the UNFPA country programme technical support team.

20. Together with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), ESCWA contributed to the advancement of women through the implementation of a project to strengthen the statistical capacity for promoting the participation of women in development. ESCWA activities also included a project to promote the participation of women in the food and textile industries and support women's non-governmental organizations in the ESCWA region and preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. In the social field, ESCWA cooperated with the United Nations Office at Vienna in organizing meetings to prepare regional studies on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and studies on the situation and prospects of ageing in the ESCWA region and in preparations for the International Year of the Family.

21. Close cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, specialized agencies of the United Nations, and regional organizations continued in the areas of biotechnology, tissue culture technology and related applications as well as in the integration of science and technology in the development-planning and management process.

22. ESCWA signed an agreement with IDB to co-finance a project on the assessment of water resources using remote-sensing techniques.

23. Initial steps were taken to coordinate ESCWA water-related activities with the Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management (INWRDM).

24. ESCWA continued its close cooperation with LAS. Contacts have been initiated to promote close cooperation for the establishment of a training network for the regional council on water resources and to explore the possibility of conducting a conference on water resources in the occupied Arab territories. ESCWA also participated as an observer in the meeting of the LAS Committee on Coordination of Trade Information.

25. ESCWA participated in the First Arab-African Trade Fair, held in Tunis in October 1993, and presented a paper on trade relations between the ESCWA region and African countries. The Trade Fair was jointly organized by LAS and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). ESCWA also cooperated with LAS in organizing the above-mentioned Arab Population Conference, held in Amman from 4 to 8 April 1993.

26. An agreement was reached with the General Secretariat of LAS (substantive secretariat of the Arab Council of Ministries of Housing and Construction) for cooperation in the preparations for the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

27. Efforts of the regional organizations are focused on preparations for the World Summit for Social Development. The regional organizations that will participate include LAS, the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD). Continued cooperation between ESCWA and AGFUND is also maintained through the Regional Household Survey Project.

28. In the context of ESCWA resolution 180 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on regional cooperation and coordination in the field of environment, in which the Commission called for "the establishment of an Arab and international inter-agency coordinating committee on environment and development for the ESCWA region...with the purpose of promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development", ESCWA, in cooperation with LAS and FAO, established the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR).

III. SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

29. The seventeenth session of the Commission was held at its temporary headquarters in Amman from 29 to 31 May 1994. Its work covered five meetings.

30. The session was attended by the following members of the Commission:[6] Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

31. In accordance with rule 63 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, the following States Members of the United Nations not members of the Commission participated as observers in the work of the session: Armenia, China, France, Germany, the Holy See, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Morocco, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia.

32. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies attended the session as observers: United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Population Fund; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat); United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); International Labour Organization; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; World Health Organization; International Telecommunication Union; and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

33. Representatives of the following governmental and non-governmental regional organizations also attended the session as observers: Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands; Demographic Centre (Cairo); Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO); Arab Labour Organization; Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD); Association of the Islamic World; General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries; Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); Islamic Development Bank; League of Arab States; Union of Arab Banks; and Union of Arab Universities.

1. *Election of officers*

34. At its 1st meeting, held on 29 May 1994, the Commission unanimously elected the following: His Excellency Mr. Ziyad Fariz (Jordan) as Chairman of the seventeenth session; Mr. Abdel Rahman Madani (Syrian Arab Republic) and His Excellency Sheikh Mohammad bin Khalifah Al Thani (Qatar) as Vice-Chairmen; and Mr. Walid Said Mustafa (Palestine) as Rapporteur.

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[6] For the names of participants in the session, see annex I.

2. *Credentials*

35. In accordance with rule 11 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, the credentials of the representatives as submitted to the Executive Secretary were examined and found to be in order.

3. *Organization of work*

36. At its 1st meeting, the Commission adopted the proposals for the organization of its work contained in document E/ESCWA/17/2/Rev.1.

B. AGENDA

37. At its 1st meeting, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/ESCWA/17/L.1/Rev.2 as follows:[7]

1. Opening of the session.

2. Election of officers.

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Organization of work.

5. Invitation to States Members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies not members of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in the seventeenth session of the Commission.

6. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission:

   (a) Progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993;

   (b) Follow-up action on the resolutions of the Commission adopted at its sixteenth session:

      (i) Resolution 179 (XVI) on setting up a statistics committee within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;

      (ii) Resolution 180 (XVI) on regional cooperation and coordination in the field of environment and sustainable development;

      (iii) Resolution 181 (XVI) on support for the Regional Household Survey Project in the ESCWA countries;

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[7] For a list of the documents submitted to the Commission at its seventeenth session, see annex II.

(iv) Resolution 182 (XVI) on the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Decade for Western Asia (1994-2003);

(v) Resolution 183 (XVI) on the reconstruction of Lebanon;

(vi) Resolution 184 (XVI) on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(vii) Resolution 185 (XVI) on the economic and social conditions of the Syrian people under Israeli occupation in the occupied Syrian Golan;

(c) Follow-up action at the regional level on United Nations world conferences and ESCWA regional meetings;

(d) Cooperation among developing countries and regional organizations.

7. Financial status of the Commission's programmes.

8. Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: restructuring of ESCWA programmes.

9. Revised medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997; second revision.

10. Draft revision of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995.

11. Proposed outline of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997.

12. Designation of sectoral focal points.

13. The permanent headquarters of the Commission (resolution 192 (XVI) on the permanent headquarters of the Commission).

14. Current issues of importance to the ESCWA region: methods of strengthening mechanisms and techniques of activating intraregional trade among the States members of the Commission.

15. Adoption of the final report of the Technical Committee on its eighth session.

16. Date, venue and provisional agenda of the eighteenth session of the Commission.

17. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its seventeenth session.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

38. The session was opened by His Excellency Mr. Ziyad Fariz, Minister of Planning of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Chairman of the previous session and head of the delegation of Jordan to the seventeenth session, who, on behalf of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal, read

out a statement by the Crown Prince to the Commission session, which was held under his patronage. In his statement, the Crown Prince welcomed the heads and members of delegations and international organizations participating in the session and expressed the hope that their efforts would be crowned with success.

39. The Crown Prince referred to the extremely important place which ESCWA occupied for all the countries of the region, particularly in its role of providing technical assistance to them and carrying out scientific studies and projects needed to support the process of development in those countries, commending the efforts made by ESCWA in that area.

40. He noted that the seventeenth session of ESCWA was especially important at the current juncture, coming as it did in a period marked by new political and economic conditions and developments, both regional and international, that would greatly affect all the countries of Western Asia without exception.

41. He stressed that it was incumbent upon the States of Western Asia to develop new, common concepts of security, political and economic stability and economic and social development in the region in a manner that was consistent with the nature of recent developments in the region and served the interests of all its peoples.

42. He expressed Jordan's readiness to extend a helping and supporting hand for any effort made or any joint endeavour that served the interests of the States of the region and was aimed at the attainment of their common objectives with a view to achieving full economic and social development.

43. He concluded by wishing the session success in its deliberations.

44. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA, in his statement, extended his gratitude to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal for his gracious patronage of the session. He also expressed his appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ziyad Fariz, Chairman of the sixteenth session of ESCWA, the two Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur for their efforts in conducting the sixteenth session.

45. He then turned to the conditions under which the current session was being held, stating that they were characterized by rapid transformations and changes taking place in various fields throughout the world. Such conditions, he said, exerted enormous social, economic and political pressure on the societies of the region's countries, requiring them to adapt and adjust rapidly to those transformations.

46. He mentioned that the year 1993 was characterized by a number of negative economic aspects, the most important indicators of which were the decline in economic growth rates and the persistence of balance-of-payments deficits in most of the region's countries. Nevertheless, the region had witnessed some positive developments, including a greater role of the private sector and an increase in the share of that sector in the economic activity of most of the ESCWA countries as well as in the share of non-petroleum sectors in most of the countries of GCC.

47. He mentioned that the ESCWA secretariat was adjusting its plans and work programmes so as to develop its role, its activities and its working procedures and become an effective centre for supporting development efforts and promoting economic integration and cooperation among its member States.

48. He briefly reviewed some of the activities carried out by ESCWA during the biennium 1992-1993, pointing out that some activities had been added in response to new developments. He mentioned that in undertaking its activities, the Commission had sought to establish clearly defined areas of cooperation among the States of the region and to reveal their distinctive features and potentialities.

49. He said that a rapid look at the developments clearly showed the extent of the challenges which that part of the world faced, and that meeting those challenges necessitated revitalizing cooperation among the States of the region, which might require a re-examination of the strategy of cooperation and economic integration among the countries of the Arab region. In conclusion, he invited the heads of the Arab regional organizations concerned with development and economic integration issues to discuss the holding of a meeting to consider appropriate ways and means of enhancing the participation of those organizations in mapping out a new strategy of development and economic integration among the States of the region in order to cope with changing international conditions.

1. *Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission: progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993*

(Agenda item 6 (a))
(E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I) and Add.1-10 and Part II)[8]

50. The Executive Secretary reviewed the documents included under the item. He noted that the implementation rate for quantifiable activities was 80 per cent of the total approved activities despite the high vacancy rate, which reached 30 per cent. In respect of the progress achieved in the implementation of the programme of work, the attention of the representatives was focused on the issue of vacancies and on the future of activities not implemented in the specified period and the funds allocated for their implementation. The discussions also centred on reports submitted to the Commission on specific topics, particularly shared water resources in the region.

51. Regarding vacancies, one of the representatives asked about the activities which were cancelled or postponed and the criteria adopted in such cases. He also asked about the reason for the rise in the level of vacancies and about current efforts to fill them. He said that there were numerous documents under agenda item 6 (a) and that his delegation would submit written comments to the secretariat.

52. Another representative asked whether a vacancy rate of 30 per cent meant that 30 per cent of available resources were not being utilized. He expressed the hope that the Commission would be able to avail itself of all its resources. He also enquired about the reason for the failure of the Commission to take advantage of the post financed by FAO, as mentioned in the document, inasmuch as the post had remained vacant for 24 months.

53. Another representative noted that the issue of vacancies was a long-standing problem that had been raised at every session of the Commission. He attributed the problem to the uncertainty over the secretariat headquarters, and to the failure of some member States to use up their quotas for technical posts, in addition to the decline in the funds available to the United Nations and the consequent impact on the regional commissions. He expressed the hope that member States would maintain an

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[8] For the publications and basic documents issued by the Commission since its sixteenth session, see annex III.

appropriate level of representation and participation in the work of the Commission and stressed the importance of media coverage of its activities. He called for an assessment of the work of the ESCWA secretariat in comparison with that of other similar commissions. He stated that even 20 years after its establishment, ESCWA still faced the problem of a high vacancy rate, with the consequent cancellation or postponement of a number of planned activities.

54. One of the representatives asked for a clarification on the issue of a recruitment freeze and asked if it also included programmes financed from extrabudgetary resources.

55. On the subject of changes in the programme of work, one of the representatives referred to annex I of the document under discussion, which listed a large number of planned activities which were "postponed" or "terminated". He asked about the future of those activities and enquired about the reasons for their postponement or termination, particularly in view of the allocation of specific funds for their implementation.

56. In response to the questions raised concerning the vacancy rates in the secretariat of ESCWA and the recruitment procedures, a representative of the secretariat stated that the reason was the recruitment freeze on Professional posts and that it was noted for that reason that the post financed by FAO, for example, had remained vacant for a long time. The recruitment freeze would be lifted after the restructuring of the work programmes for the coming period was completed. Some activities had been carried over from the 1990-1991 to the 1992-1993 programme of work owing to the conditions that the Commission faced. In some cases, consultants had been hired to complete such activities. The criteria observed in the postponement or cancellation of activities depended on the priority of the activity and on the availability, within the secretariat, of experts in the particular field.

57. The Executive Secretary explained that vacant posts in the ESCWA secretariat were filled through vacancy announcements in accordance with the rules followed at the United Nations. He pointed out that programmes financed from extrabudgetary resources were not subject to those procedures in terms of quotas and the recruitment freeze. In that context, the Executive Secretary thanked the Governments of Germany and Sweden for providing two posts in the fields of social development and water resources.

58. A representative of the secretariat explained that P-1 and P-2 posts were filled through internal appointments allocated to General Service staff members who passed the examination which qualified them to be appointed to Professional posts. Appointment to P-3 posts was limited to those who passed the examinations organized by the United Nations Secretariat in countries which had not used up more than half of their share of posts. Appointments to P-4 posts and above were announced in accordance with the rules followed in the United Nations Secretariat and were made, usually, from within the ranks of United Nations employees or from outside candidates.

59. The Executive Secretary continued to present item 6 (a) of the agenda. He then briefly reviewed each of the 10 reports submitted under the item.

60. In a comment on the document dealing with the implementation of the Arab Declaration on Environment and Development and Future Prospects (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.1), the representative of UNEP stressed the importance of coordination between regional and international bodies in a way that would complement their activities. He proposed that LAS cooperate with ESCWA in the preparation of a study on possible mechanisms of financing the implementation of the

recommendations, and that the study should be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment.

61. Regarding the document entitled "Assistance to Existing Industries" (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.2), a representative expressed the hope that ESCWA would play a pioneering role in that field, particularly in terms of providing assistance to advanced industries instead of concentrating on basic industries, such as textiles.

62. The Executive Secretary noted that ESCWA sought to respond to requests of member States for technical assistance in the field of industry within its available resources. This was done in coordination with other international organizations involved.

63. A representative of the secretariat stressed the importance of the comments made by representatives, and gave assurances that they would be taken into consideration, particularly in view of the forthcoming ministerial meeting of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization in Rabat from 20 to 24 June 1994. He indicated that the Conference was expected to discuss ways of supporting the programme of assistance to industries in the Arab region, to be implemented in cooperation with UNIDO, AIDMO and ESCWA.

64. In the discussion of the report on cooperation among ESCWA countries in the field of shared water resources (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.3), the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic expressed his appreciation of the efforts made by ESCWA in the preparation of the report. He said that experts from his country had submitted a number of comments on water resources in his country to be taken into consideration.

65. Another representative stated that ESCWA could make additional efforts to prepare an in-depth study and to propose alternative solutions to achieve fair distribution as well as conservation of water resources. He stressed the need for basic controls in this field to be followed by the countries concerned.

66. The representative of Lebanon said that it must be emphasized that the entire Litani river basin was Lebanese, inasmuch as both the source and the mouth of the river were in Lebanon.

67. Another representative pointed out that the document addressed a subject of increasing importance at this juncture. He said that the report only provided information, whereas attention should be given to legal aspects. He expressed the hope that the ESCWA secretariat would prepare a study on that aspect and on Arab rights to shared water resources. He indicated that he advocated a clear-cut, unified Arab position on that issue.

68. Another representative expressed appreciation for the efforts exerted by the secretariat in collecting the information on water resources in the ESCWA member States. He said that he failed to understand the extent of the "progress achieved". He noted that water resources had become extremely limited, and expressed the hope that ESCWA would play a positive role in that field in the future.

69. The Executive Secretary pointed out in that regard that the report was a warning of the danger of the illegal use of the waters of member States.

70. A representative commented on the question of establishing a regional committee for natural resources. He commended the secretariat on the document submitted on that subject and noted that it focused mainly on issues related to water resources.

71. A representative commented on the document concerning progress achieved in the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.5), which also related to water resource management. He said that experts from his country had met with their ESCWA counterparts and had submitted their observations, which should be taken into account.

72. The representative of a member State, referring to the report on the progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action for the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy during the last decade (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.6) and the report on the promotion of selected renewable energy projects (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.7), commended the project on renewable energy implemented in his country in the field of rural development, stating that the project had achieved considerable success and had been well received by the communities concerned. He welcomed the increased cooperation in that field.

73. The Chairman explained that the report on the promotion of cooperation among ESCWA countries for the setting up of a centre for space science and technology education (E/ESCWA/17/4-(Part I)/Add.8) was intended only to provide information on what had been accomplished in that field.

74. The Executive Secretary introduced the report on support for technical assistance projects for the development of women (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.9). He then introduced the report on the progress made in the ESCWA plan to implement Agenda 21 (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.10).

75. The Executive Secretary then reviewed the second part of the document on technical cooperation activities (E/ESCWA/17/4(Part II)).

76. Statements were delivered by the representatives of Germany, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

2. *Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission: follow-up action on the resolutions of the Commission adopted at its sixteenth session*

(Agenda item 6 (b))
(E/ESCWA/17/5 and Add.1-7)

77. The Executive Secretary introduced the documents relevant to the item to provide information regarding the follow-up action on the resolutions adopted at the previous session. The Commission took note of the following reports:

(a) Resolution 179 (XVI) on setting up a statistics committee within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.1);

(b) Resolution 180 (XVI) on regional cooperation and coordination in the field of environment and sustainable development (E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.2);

(c) Resolution 181 (XVI) on support for the Regional Household Survey Project in the ESCWA countries (E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.3);

(d) Resolution 182 (XVI) on the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Decade for Western Asia (1994-2003) (E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.4).

78. In connection with resolution 183 (XVI) on the reconstruction of Lebanon (E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.5), the representative of Lebanon expressed his appreciation for the Commission's interest in his country, which needed vast financial resources to finance reconstruction activities. He then addressed the reference in the document to the cultivation of illicit crops. He said that the document stated only a small part of Lebanon's requirements in the field of agriculture. He expressed the hope that the study would highlight the positive aspects and the need to extend assistance to Lebanon.

79. A representative of the secretariat pointed out that the study was prepared at the request of the Government of Lebanon and in coordination with it. Its objective was to conduct a complete survey of the Bekaa Valley to be used in the efforts to eradicate undesirable agricultural products. He added that the project was currently under execution.

(a) *Resolution 184 (XVI) on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people in the occupied Palestinian territories*

(Agenda item 6 (b)(vi))
(E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.6)

80. The representative of Palestine expressed his appreciation for the efforts made by the secretariat to provide assistance to the Palestinian people. He enquired whether all the activities concerning the Palestinian people were carried out with funds from the regular budget.

81. In that connection, the representative of the secretariat pointed out that the Secretary-General had asked for an evaluation of the role of ESCWA in providing support to the Palestinian people. ESCWA had submitted that evaluation in September 1993.

82. The representative of Palestine stated that he hoped that the study on the problem of land reclamation in the occupied Palestinian territories, currently being prepared, would propose practical solutions to the problem.

(b) *Resolution 185 (XVI) on the economic and social conditions of the Syrian people under Israeli occupation in the occupied Syrian Golan*

(Agenda item 6 (b)(vii))
(E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.7)

83. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that his delegation had several observations on the document and had discussed them with those concerned in the secretariat in order to take those observations into consideration. In reply, the Executive Secretary assured the representative that he intended to forward the study prepared pursuant to the resolution in question to the competent authorities in the Syrian Arab Republic in order to obtain their views for guidance.

3. *Follow-up action at the regional level on United Nations world conferences and ESCWA regional meetings*
(Agenda item 6 (c))
(E/ESCWA/17/6)

84. The Commission took note of what had been accomplished with regard to follow-up action on world conferences and regional meetings.

4. *Cooperation among developing countries and regional organizations*
(Agenda item 6 (d))
(E/ESCWA/17/7)

85. The Commission took note of the content of the document.

5. *Financial status of the Commission's programmes*
(Agenda item 7)
(E/ESCWA/17/8/Add.1-3)

86. The Executive Secretary introduced the agenda item. A representative of the secretariat reviewed the three documents submitted under the item.

87. A representative noted that the extrabudgetary resources which the secretariat used to supplement its regular budget had not increased. He asked whether the secretariat had made efforts to benefit from other financing sources.

88. A number of representatives enquired about the reasons why no contributions were forthcoming for the Trust Fund for ESCWA Regional Activities.

89. In that regard, a representative stated that the unusual circumstances facing the States of the ESCWA region had prevented the replenishment of the Trust Fund. Other reasons included the instability of the secretariat, the bureaucratic process of programme formulation and the lack of field orientation.

90. Another representative suggested that the secretariat take the initiative in proposing new projects and presenting them to the donor States interested in facilitating and financing development projects in developing countries.

91. Several representatives enquired about the notable discrepancies between the regular budget approved for the secretariat of ESCWA for the biennium 1992-1993 and actual expenditure, reflected in a savings of about US$ 15 million. They asked if that would affect subsequent budgets and if those budgets would be trimmed.

92. The Executive Secretary pointed out that the savings was attributable to the fact that the budget of ESCWA was based on allocations for Baghdad as the headquarters of the Commission. Actual

expenditures were calculated in accordance with the financial criteria applicable in Jordan. He stressed that that would not affect the allocations for subsequent budgets.

93. A representative stated that involving the grass roots in the implementation of projects by United Nations organizations would encourage certain financing bodies to finance projects that would have concrete results. He called on the secretariat to follow that approach, as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), for example, had already done.

94. A representative of the secretariat stated that some United Nations organizations, such as UNICEF and UNDP, were financing institutions involved in fieldwork at the local and national levels. ESCWA had a regional orientation. In spite of the awareness of the significance of field activities, United Nations regulations necessitated financing most field activities from extrabudgetary resources. However, ESCWA was currently seeking to link its field activities with research activities to secure the required funds. There was a move towards field projects.

6. *Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: restructuring of ESCWA programmes*
(Agenda item 8)
(E/ESCWA/17/9/Rev.1)

95. Reviewing this item on the restructuring of ESCWA programmes in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions on strengthening the role and contribution of regional commissions as centres for economic and social development and regional cooperation, a representative of the secretariat pointed out that the process of restructuring ESCWA programmes was based on the views of member States obtained during their participation in the Technical Committee which had convened in October 1993. The secretariat had also sought the advice of leading experts in the field of economic and social development.

96. With regard to the Arabic text of the document under discussion,[9] a representative drew attention to paragraph 23 of the annex to the document (E/ESCWA/17/9/Rev.1) and affirmed that the Commission should adhere to its terms of reference, namely social and economic development, and observe its rules of procedure, despite the concern of all member States for democracy.

97. Another representative expressed the wish that the team of experts which provided technical advice to the secretariat on restructuring the Commission's programmes had included representatives of member States who were aware of the situation in those States and who were not merely experts working in regional and Arab organizations.

98. The representative of Palestine stated that his delegation had already requested that a development programme be set up in the occupied territories. He said that the restructuring of the Commission's programmes, as contained in the document, did not reflect the developments which had taken place in the occupied territories and had not provided for any programme specifically for those territories. He called on the heads of delegation to draw up a specific programme with an appropriate budget to assist the Palestinian people during the coming phase.

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[9] The Arabic text referred to "the importance of democratization in the region"; the English text referred to "the importance of democratization of the process of development in the region".

99. The Executive Secretary affirmed the commitment of the secretariat to its role in social and economic development. He pointed out that the document set forth the proposals made by the experts and did not necessarily reflect the position of the secretariat. Concerning the composition of the team, he said that it mainly comprised experts working in scientific centres, universities and government organizations in the member States.

7. *Revised medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (second revision)*
(Agenda item 9)
(E/ESCWA/17/10)

100. Reviewing the item, the representative of the secretariat stated that the revised plan consisted of five subprogrammes based on core themes rather than on the former sectoral structures. Those programmes were: (1) management of natural resources and environment; (2) improvement of the quality of life; (3) economic development and cooperation; (4) regional development and global changes; and (5) special issues. It summarized the overall objectives of the revised medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 as follows: (a) strengthening policy, project and programme coordination; (b) addressing the social, cultural, ecological and technical dimensions of economic development; (c) providing opportunities for the acceleration of the process of sustainable development in the region; and (d) studying the impact on the international economic blocs, such as the European Union and others.

101. A representative of the secretariat referred to a number of considerations taken into account in the preparation of the revised plan, including: the scarce financial resources available for development purposes; ever-increasing political instability; the need to achieve a balance between environmental considerations and the development and utilization of natural resources; the emergence of international economic blocs; and the possible outcome of the peace talks.

102. A representative stated that there was a contradiction between the economic integration sought by the secretariat and market liberalization.

103. A representative of the secretariat said that there was no contradiction between economic integration and market liberalization, since integration was essential in opening the way to the international economy and member States could not contribute to international developments unless there was solid integration among them.

104. Referring to preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995, a representative expressed the hope that the Commission would support the efforts of States to prepare their contributions to the Conference. She commended the secretariat on its efforts to develop a database on women, since the data available in the region were insufficient for the purpose of producing the national reports to be submitted to the Beijing Conference. Noting that the programme of work included the establishment of a workshop to improve entrepreneurial skills in managing small projects, she hoped that it would focus on women, as such projects constituted one of the best ways of solving the problem of poverty.

105. The Executive Secretary pointed out that the secretariat, with the support of UNIFEM, had assisted a governmental women's association in establishing the Documentation Centre on Arab

Women in Jordan and that two courses on entrepreneurship had already been held in Jordan, one of which was devoted to the training of women.

106. Another representative pointed out that the new subprogrammes, as titled, permitted the inclusion of a large number of projects. It was important to optimize use of the Commission's resources, to continue focusing its activities as a system for monitoring and giving early warning of significant economic and social events, and to undertake new and entrepreneurial activities which member States were unable to carry out.

107. With regard to water resources, a representative referred to the importance of improving the financial situation of organizations concerned with water, and further pointed out the need to address the question of sewage in view of the environmental and health problems that it caused.

108. A representative of the secretariat explained that the medium-term plan referred only to the general outlines of the programmes covering that subject and contained none of its details.

8. *Draft revision of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995*

(Agenda item 10)
(E/ESCWA/17/11 and Corr.1)

109. A representative of the secretariat presented the item, indicating that the new approach to be adopted by the Commission would rationalize the use of available financial and human resources and maximize the impact of the activities by dealing with such activities from various aspects. She also presented the different topics listed under each of the five proposed subprogrammes.

110. A representative referred to subprogramme 5 on special issues, and expressed the hope that activities under the subprogramme would include activities specific to Jordan.

111. Another representative suggested that activities relating to the occupied Palestinian territories be identified in coordination and cooperation with the competent institutions of the Palestinian National Authority.

112. A representative of the secretariat who headed the Palestine Task Force indicated that the ESCWA secretariat was in communication with the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction and that agricultural projects in the occupied territories were selected in consultation with concerned Palestinian authorities. An expert group from ESCWA and FAO would visit the occupied territories in June 1994 to consult with the Ministry of Agriculture and other concerned ministries to agree on the details of relevant programmes.

113. A representative of the secretariat replied to a number of enquiries by participants, one of which related to the term "External Relations" used in the document, by which was meant the relation between the ESCWA secretariat and any entity other than those of the member States. No mention of the latter was made in that context owing to the fact that the main task of ESCWA was to serve the member States. The representative of the secretariat indicated that the programme of work for the biennium 1994-1995, which had been presented to the Technical Committee at its eighth session, was revised in accordance with the five subprogrammes.

9. *Proposed outline of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997*

(Agenda item 11)
(E/ESCWA/17/12)

114. A representative of the secretariat indicated that the document contained the outline of the programme of work, the activities of which, following its adoption, would be formulated in detail by the secretariat in consultation with the member States.

115. A representative commented on the subprogramme on "Improvement of the Quality of Life", stating that many issues, such as poverty and unemployment, affected the quality of life. He expressed the hope that those issues would be addressed through detailed programmes and not through studies alone.

116. Regarding water, one representative suggested the inclusion of two additional activities: (a) follow-up of legal issues related to water; and (b) study of shared water basins. Another representative emphasized the importance of that suggestion and stressed the need to deal with the issue of how to enhance investment in shared water basins.

117. A representative of the ESCWA secretariat indicated that ESCWA was currently undertaking a study on underground basalt resources shared by Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The authorities concerned had been contacted with a view to the sending of a group of experts from the secretariat to the Syrian Arab Republic to study the issue. He also noted that water legislation was a part of water resource management and ESCWA had suggested that a council be established for coordination among member States in studying the issue at the national and interregional levels.

118. A representative of a member State referred to the importance of studying the impact of the peace process on the region. She said that it was necessary to define the type of studies to be conducted in that context. She stressed the importance of the impact of the peace process on the region's economies.

119. Another representative called for the secretariat to ensure coordination with other Arab organizations such as LAS, GCC and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the implementation of ESCWA activities. He suggested that ESCWA should publicize the studies it undertook for the benefit of other organizations to avoid duplication of efforts.

120. The Executive Secretary indicated that the programmes of the secretariat dealt with social problems facing the ESCWA countries, including poverty and unemployment, which were dealt with in the subprogramme on the improvement of the quality of life.

121. Referring to the approach of ESCWA in carrying out its work, a representative of the secretariat said that the Commission aimed at involving the relevant institutions in the member States in establishing the details of its programmes of work and discussing the general framework and the final form of its studies.

10. *Designation of sectoral focal points*
(Agenda item 12)
(E/ESCWA/17/13)

122. Several representatives indicated that existing focal points were sufficient for coordination between the relevant authorities in member States and the substantive divisions of the secretariat. Some representatives also indicated that coordination could be established between the substantive divisions and their counterparts in member States during the implementation phase of activities. It was agreed that the matter would be elaborated further when the final document was drafted.

123. There was also agreement, in that regard, that in all phases of activity the consultations with the existing central coordinating authorities should begin with the planning phase. One representative suggested that proposed activities should be in harmony with national strategies. The Executive Secretary replied that activities were determined according to the needs and priorities of member States.

11. *The permanent headquarters of the Commission (resolution 192 (XVI))*
(Agenda item 13)
(E/ESCWA/17/14)

124. The heads of delegation of the member States held a closed meeting to discuss agenda item 13. Some heads of delegation requested, and all the members agreed, that the main points discussed during the closed session be included in the final report of the session.

125. Opening the meeting, the Chairman of the session requested the Executive Secretary to introduce the item. The Executive Secretary said that the report on the item had been prepared pursuant to resolution 192 (XVI) on the permanent headquarters of the Commission and that it contained an appraisal of the various offers to host the Commission, received from Jordan, Qatar and Lebanon. He said the floor was open for the discussion of the report. The Chairman asked the Executive Secretary to read the report. A discussion followed.

126. The head of the delegation of Lebanon made the following remarks:

(a) He thanked the secretariat for the report which, however, he said was deficient in certain respects. He attributed that to the rapid developments taking place in the area of reconstruction in Lebanon, including the rehabilitation of utilities such as electricity, water and communications. He indicated that the 30-storey building proposed would be refurbished in accordance with ESCWA requirements within a period of six months. He added that the building was situated in the heart of Beirut and would house only United Nations agencies;

(b) On the subject of schools and universities, he said that Lebanon had a wide range of foreign-language schools as well as seven universities, including the American University of Beirut and St. Joseph University;

(c) The geographical location of Lebanon, he said, was a centre for the free exchange of ideas and a bridge for cultural contact;

(d) On the Headquarters Agreement, he said that, a year before, Lebanon had enacted legislation that would ensure privileges and immunities for international and regional organizations and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was charged with the implementation of its provisions;

(e) He said that security prevailed throughout Lebanon, which enjoyed security conditions superior to those in other countries. Lebanon had a large American community and hosted a United States Embassy and Consulate and a number of American schools;

(f) Moreover, ESCWA was badly in need of stability, as it faced major challenges in the immediate future.

127. The deputy head of the delegation of Qatar said that his country had offered to host the permanent headquarters of the Commission because of its interest in ensuring for the Commission the stability it would need to discharge its functions and responsibilities. He said that the Commission had long suffered from instability, a factor that had weakened its role in the service of the region. He said Qatar would meet all the requirements of the Commission to enable it to discharge its functions in the best possible way. He made the following remarks:

Utilities: He said that electricity, water and communications services were adequate and inexpensive.

The headquarters building: He said that, while the building currently offered was adequate for a headquarters, Qatar was ready to construct a new building in accordance with required specifications.

Education: He said that Qatar had a variety of schools that would meet the needs of the dependants of the staff, whatever their nationalities;

Housing: Housing was readily available at reasonable rents;

Local staff: He said that Qatar received labour from various countries and that the local labour market was in a position to provide whatever skills were required; the Government would also solve any difficulty relating to employment that might occur.

128. The deputy head of the delegation of Jordan stated that the report of the fact-finding mission charged by the United Nations to assess the offers to host the permanent headquarters of ESCWA based on a number of criteria showed clearly and objectively that Jordan came first in terms of meeting those criteria, as indicated in the report of the mission, with regard to the following:

(a) The security factor placed Jordan above the other countries offering to host the Commission; in addition, there were no travel restrictions in Jordan. Furthermore, the financial aspect of the relocation process also showed that Jordan had an advantage in terms of current expenses or transport expenses, and that the amounts in question were considerable, as clearly shown in the report;

(b) Living conditions there eminently satisfied the operational needs of the Commission, both in terms of the telecommunications and in terms of transport systems and water and electricity utilities. In addition, housing was readily available in Jordan at reasonable rents. With regard to education, various international and local schools were there to meet the needs of ESCWA staff;

(c) In Jordan, there was a great abundance of highly qualified bilingual personnel who were capable of undertaking all support functions required by the Commission;

(d) In the event that Jordan were chosen as the permanent headquarters of the Commission, the Government of Jordan would promptly offer all necessary facilities including a suitable building, facilities and diplomatic privileges in accordance with a mutually satisfactory agreement.

He stressed that the selection of the permanent headquarters of the Commission must be made in the light of the assessment given in the report, which upon review showed that Jordan had offered the best conditions.

129. The head of the delegation of Iraq stated that his country was still the permanent headquarters of the Commission. Iraq had provided the Commission with all the facilities needed for the optimal discharge of its functions. It was unwise to adopt a hasty decision based on the current exceptional circumstances in Iraq, which could soon change. Therefore Iraq, eager to preserve solidarity among the member States of the Commission which it had supported generously, would suggest that no decision be taken on relocating the permanent headquarters from Baghdad to any other site, since doing so for no compelling reason and under the current exceptional circumstances would seem more like punishment meted out to Iraq by some of its brothers, something which Iraq had totally rejected.

130. During the discussion of the report on the permanent headquarters, the representatives of Jordan, Oman and Palestine stated that the information contained in the report was incomplete and needed to be completed in order for the resolution to be adopted on a solid, scientific basis. Discussions then followed on requests for postponement of the decision pending further information, lest a decision be taken on the basis of an incomplete report and in order to enable member States wishing to host the permanent headquarters to submit their offers in accordance with option B of the report.

131. A number of representatives affirmed the need to take a decision on the offers made during the current session, since any postponement would create further difficulties for the Commission in the management of its work. They said that it was unreasonable for such high-level delegations to be unable to take a decision in that regard.

132. A proposal by one State to postpone the decision at the current session in accordance with option B of the report and to decide on the matter within a year was put to the vote. The result of the vote was as follows: six States were in favour of postponement and seven States were opposed; thus the proposal did not gain a majority according to the rules of procedure and terms of reference of the Commission.

133. The meeting then proceeded to vote on the choice of the site of the permanent headquarters of the Commission in one of the States that had expressed their willingness to host the permanent headquarters of the Commission, namely Jordan, Lebanon and Qatar. The representative of Iraq stressed the position of his Government that the permanent headquarters should be kept in Baghdad on the grounds that there were no cogent reasons for transferring it. The result of the vote was in favour of Lebanon as the permanent headquarters of the Commission.

134. The head of the delegation of Iraq requested that his reservation regarding the decision be recorded.

135. The representative of Qatar requested that the report on the permanent headquarters of the Commission be annexed to the final report of the seventeenth session[10] and that host country obligations be specified in a way that would ensure stability and a propitious climate for the work of the Commission. All the delegations supported that suggestion.

12. *Current issues of importance to the ESCWA region: methods of strengthening mechanisms and techniques of activating intraregional trade among the States members of the Commission*
(Agenda item 14)
(E/ESCWA/17/15 and Corr.1)

136. The Executive Secretary presented a review on the document in question.

137. A representative pointed out that economic integration imposed certain conditions on the member States, such as economic planning and the abolition of customs duties. He asked whether the objective was market integration or development integration. Another representative called attention to the importance of both multilateral and bilateral agreements aimed at encouraging trade. Still another representative wondered why there was such general reference to a "lack of political will" and what it actually meant.

138. A representative of the secretariat then pointed out that the study had sought to find new reasons to explain the faltering progress of intraregional trade in the region, stating that one cause was the manner in which decisions were adopted regarding steps toward cooperation. He stated that the objective of integration was to achieve coordination between market and development aspects, not to abolish either of them. He emphasized that the Commission strove to cooperate with other international organizations in that field.

13. *Adoption of the final report of the Technical Committee on its eighth session*
(Agenda item 15)
(E/ESCWA 17/16)

139. At its 5th plenary meeting, held on 31 May 1994, the Commission adopted the report of the Technical Committee on its eighth session, contained in document E/ESCWA/17/16, and the resolution on the frequency of sessions of the Commission and the Technical Committee (resolution 196 (XVII)).

14. *Date, venue and provisional agenda of the eighteenth session of the Commission*
(Agenda item 16)

140. The member States welcomed the offer of the Government of Lebanon to host the eighteenth session of the Commission in Beirut in April 1995.

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[10] See annex IV to the present report.

15. *Adoption of the report of the Commission on its seventeenth session*
(Agenda item 18)

141. The Commission adopted the draft report on its seventeenth session, after the agreed amendments had been added thereto. During the discussion of the final draft of resolution 197 (XVII), the representatives of Qatar and Iraq stated their delegations' reservations regarding the financial commitments that might arise from any resolution the Commission might adopt.

IV. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION[11]

196 (XVII). Frequency of sessions of the Commission and the Technical Committee

197 (XVII). The permanent headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

198 (XVII). Establishment of a committee on social development within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

199 (XVII). Medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

200 (XVII). Draft revision of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995

201 (XVII). Proposed outline of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997

202 (XVII). The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

203 (XVII). Follow-up of the decisions and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Regional Preparatory Meeting and of the Fourth World Conference on Women

199 (XVII). Medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997[12]

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 45/253 of 21 December 1990 on programme planning, in which the Assembly adopted the United Nations medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 and reaffirmed that the plan as adopted was the principal policy directive of the United Nations,

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and in particular paragraph 6 of the annex to resolution 46/235 concerning the strengthening of the regional commissions,

Recalling further ESCWA resolution 191 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields,

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[11] The texts of resolutions 196 (XVII), 197 (XVII) and 198 (XVII) may be found in chapter I of the present report.

[12] For the related discussion, see paragraphs 100 to 108 of the present report.

Taking into consideration the views and proposals concerning various aspects of the Commission's programmes of work which were put forward by representatives of member States during the eighth session of the Technical Committee, held in Amman from 11 to 13 October 1993,

Taking note of the conclusions of the Consultation on the Restructuring of ESCWA Programmes, held in Amman from 31 January to 3 February 1994,

Commending the exceptional efforts made by the secretariat in reformulating its programmes and its revised medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997,

1. *Takes note* of the second revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997;

2. *Approves* the amendments included in the second revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, with the proviso that the comments made by the delegations during the session, concerning the challenges that face the ESCWA member States, shall be reflected in the final document.

5th plenary meeting
31 May 1994

200 (XVII). Draft revision of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995[13]

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and in particular paragraph 6 of the annex to resolution 46/235 concerning the strengthening of regional commissions,

Recalling also ESCWA resolution 191 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields,

Taking into account the views and proposals concerning various aspects of the Commission's programmes of work which were put forward by representatives of member States during the eighth session of the Technical Committee, held from 11 to 13 October 1993,

Taking also into account the second revision of the medium-term plan of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia for the period 1992-1997,

Aware that the revised draft programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995 is a transitional programme,

Commending the exceptional efforts made by the secretariat in reformulating the revised programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995,

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[13] For the related discussion, see paragraphs 109 to 113 of the present report.

Approves the revised programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995, with the proviso that the comments made by the delegations during the session, concerning the challenges that face the ESCWA member States, shall be reflected in the final document.

5th plenary meeting
31 May 1994

201 (XVII). Proposed outline of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997[14]

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the second revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997,

Noting that the proposed outline of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997 reflects the strategies and objectives of the revised medium-term plan,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and in particular paragraph 6 of the annex to resolution 46/235 concerning the strengthening of the regional commissions,

Recalling also ESCWA resolution 191 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields,

Approves the proposed outline of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997, with the proviso that the comments made by the delegations during the session, concerning the challenges that face the ESCWA member States, shall be reflected in the final document.

5th plenary meeting
31 May 1994

202 (XVII). The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/180 of 22 December 1992 on the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II),

Emphasizing the interdependence between environment, human settlements and sustainable development, as defined in Agenda 21,

Emphasizing also that the central themes for the Conference, namely the development of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world and adequate shelter for all, which were adopted

[14] For the related discussion, see paragraphs 114 to 121 of the present report.

by the Commission on Human Settlements at its fourteenth session and the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II at its first substantive session, are also priority issues for the region,

Welcoming the decisions taken by the Commission on Human Settlements at its fourteenth session and the recommendations made by the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II at its first substantive session regarding preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II),

Fully aware that the provision of adequate housing and an adequate living environment is an important means of promoting sustainable development, ensuring justice and achieving social stability,

Aware also of the importance of the Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in formulating a Statement of Principles and Commitments and a Global Plan of Action on policies and goals for shelter and for the future of human settlements - cities, towns and villages - in the twenty-first century,

1. *Urges* member States to continue to participate actively in the preparations for the Conference at the national, regional and global levels, and to make substantive contributions to ensure its success;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to coordinate and facilitate, within the limits of available resources, regional activities, including regional meetings, in preparation for Habitat II, and to report to the Commission at its eighteenth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

5th plenary meeting
31 May 1994

203 (XVII). Follow-up of the decisions and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Regional Preparatory Meeting and of the Fourth World Conference on Women

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 45/129 of 14 December 1990 and 48/108 of 20 December 1993 on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, Economic and Social Council resolutions 1990/9 of 24 May 1990 on the second report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and 1990/12 of 24 May 1990 on a world conference on women to be held in 1995, 1990/15 of 24 May 1990 on the recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000, Commission on the Status of Women resolution 37/7 of 25 March 1993 on the Preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace and the annex to Commission on the Status of Women resolution 38/10 of 18 March 1994 on the Draft Platform for Action, and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolution 188 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on the Preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace,

Recalling also the invitation to United Nations organizations and specialized agencies to take part in the Fourth World Conference on Women and to identify their future actions, aims and objectives as well as the measures they will implement for the reorganization of priorities and the reallocation of resources according to the priorities set out in the Platform for Action,

Emphasizing the need to take into account the recommendations and decisions of the Intergovernmental Regional Preparatory Meeting and of the Fourth World Conference on Women with regard to the implementation of the regional and international plan of action in the light of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000,

1. *Stresses* the need to strengthen national and regional institutional mechanisms and non-governmental organizations for the advancement of women;

2. *Urges* all Governments to establish national governmental and non-governmental joint committees and to designate focal points for the preparation of the Conference, in accordance with Commission on the Status of Women resolution 37/7 and ESCWA resolution 188 (XVI);

3. *Appeals* to regional and international donors to provide the ESCWA secretariat with the necessary support in order to follow up and implement the recommendations and decisions of the Intergovernmental Regional Preparatory Meeting and of the Fourth World Conference on Women with regard to the regional platforms for action for the advancement of women and their integration into the development process on the national and the regional levels.

5th plenary meeting
31 May 1994

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBER STATES

Bahrain

Mr. Abdul Rahman Mubarak Al-Sulaiti
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Bahrain

Mr. Ibrahim Salman Al-Shakhouri
Third Secretary
Embassy of Bahrain

Egypt

H.E. Mr. Adel Abbas Eladawy
Ambassador
Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Wagih Hamdy
Ambassador
Embassy of Egypt

Mr. Mahmoud Ibrahim Saleh
First Under-Secretary of State
Follow-up and Budgetary Planning Section

Mr. Wahid Eldin Ismail Galal
Counsellor
Embassy of Egypt

Iraq

H.E. Mr. Samal Majeed Faraj
Minister of Planning

Mr. Walid Najib Alshalchi
Third Secretary
Embassy of Iraq

Jordan

H.E. Mr. Ziyad Fariz
Minister of Planning

Mr. Nayef Al-Hadeed
Secretary-General
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Munthir Qabba'h
First Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Saed Radaideh
Attaché
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Amin Al-Tarawnah
Ministry of Industry and Trade

Mr. Akram Al-Junaidi
Counsellor to the Secretary-General
Ministry of Water and Irrigation

Mr. Mahmoud Al-Najdawi
Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. Shaher Zumot
Director, Department of Renewable Energy
Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources

Mr. Mohammad Ali Alhaj Sa'eed Ahmed
Adviser to Director General
Telecommunication Corporation

Mr. Saleh Al-Share'
Director, Department of Environment
Ministry of Rural Affairs and Environment

Mrs. Hadia Al-Khatib
Director, Social Development Section
Ministry of Social Development

Mr. Fahd Al-Hyari
Assistant to the Director General
Department of Statistics

Jordan (continued)

Mr. Talal Al-Akashah
Director, Development Cooperation Section
Higher Council for Science and Technology

Ms. Hiam Kalimat Tuguz
Director of General Secretariat of the
Jordanian National Committee for Women

Ministry of Planning

Mr. Hussein Shakhatreh

Mr. Abdel Karim Mahasneh

Mr. Ahmad Al-Hindawi

Mrs. Nadia Al-Takriti

Mr. Radi Al-Tarawnah

Mr. Bakr Al-Adwan

Ms. Amal Hijazi

Ms. Benitta Saad

Kuwait

Mr. Fisal S. Al-Mukizim
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Kuwait

Mr. Jamal M.E. Al-Ghunaim
Third Secretary
Embassy of Kuwait

Lebanon

H.E. Mr. Fares Bouez
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Lebanon (continued)

H.E. Mr. Ahmad Ibrahim
Ambassador
Embassy of Lebanon in Jordan

H.E. Mr. Walid A. Nasr
Ambassador
Director of International Organizations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. George Siam
Ambassador of Lebanon in the United Arab Emirates

H.E. Mr. Yousef Arsanios
Ambassador
Director of the Minister's Office
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. William Habib
Ambassador
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Imad Kabalan
Private Counsellor to the Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Gabriel Geara
Counsellor
Embassy of Lebanon

Oman

H.E. Mr. Mohammad Sultan Al-Busaid
Ambassador
Embassy of Oman

Mr. Mohammad Yahya Al-Shabibi
Representative
Ministry of Finance and Economy

Mr. Yacoub Khamis Al-Zadgali
Head of Social Surveys Group
Ministry of Development

Palestine

Mr. Jawad Naji Hirzalla
Director, Economic Department
Embassy of Palestine

Ms. Abla M. El-Nashashibi
Chief of Population and Development Unit
Embassy of Palestine

Mr. Walid Said Mustafa
Head of Research Department
Embassy of Palestine

Mr. Abdel Aziz Abdel Rahman Alaaraj
Embassy of Palestine

Qatar

H.E. Sheikh Mohammad bin Khalifah Al Thani
Minister of Finance, Economy and Trade

H.E. Mr. Nasser Abdul Aziz Al-Nasr
Ambassador
Embassy of Qatar

Mr. Ali bin Khalifah Al-Attiyah
Director, Office of the Minister of Finance, Economy and Trade

Mr. Ali Hassan Al-Khalaf
Head, Economic Affairs Department

Mr. Najmeddin Dajani
Chief Expert, Office of the Minister of Finance, Economy and Trade

Sheikh Sultan bin Jasim Al-Thani
Economic Researcher, Office of the Minister of Finance, Economy and Trade

Mr. Abdul Rahman Mansour
Economic Researcher, Office of the Minister of Finance, Economy and Trade

Saudi Arabia

H.E. Mr. Mohammad S. Al-Kufeidy
Minister Plenipotentiary

Mr. Anwar Abo-Al Ela
Economic Adviser
Ministry of Finance

Mr. Ghorm Said Malhan
First Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Khalid Ibrahim Alsagheer
Second Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Syrian Arab Republic

H.E. Mr. Abdel Rahman Madani
Minister of Irrigation

Mr. Tawfiq Ismail
Deputy Minister of State for Planning

Mr. Zuheir Farah Abou Daoud
Consultant, Council of Ministers

H.E. Mr. Hani Hussein Habib
Ambassador
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Majed Daoud
Director, Office of Common International Waters
Ministry of Irrigation

Mr. Bassam Al-Sibai
Director of Scientific and Technical Cooperation
State Planning Authority

Mr. Riad Sineh
Consultant
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Mohammad Ali Hasbani
Office of Common International Waters
Ministry of Irrigation

Syrian Arab Republic (continued)

Mr. Mohamed Ziad Haddad
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic

United Arab Emirates

H.E. Mr. Mohammad Jasim Shukur
Ambassador
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

Mr. Ali Abdallah Ali Younis
Deputy Director, Department of Technical Cooperation
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

Mr. Abdulla Mohammad Bishir
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

Yemen

H.E. Mr. Ali Abdulla Abu-Luhum
Ambassador

B. States Members of the United Nations not members of the Commission

Armenia

Mr. Mikhail Maloian
Head of Consular and Commercial Section
Embassy of Armenia
Damascus

China

Mr. Liu Zhen Tang
Counsellor
Embassy of China

France

Mr. Stéphane Romatet
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of France

Mr. Xavier Bapst
Cultural attaché
Embassy of France

Germany

H.E. Mr. Heinrich Reiners
Ambassador
Embassy of Germany

Mr. Michael Bock
Counsellor
Embassy of Germany

Ms. Martina John
Third Secretary
Embassy of Germany

Holy See

Monsignor Joseph Spiteri
Embassy of the Vatican

Mr. Adeeb Haddad
Director, Institute of Banking Studies
Embassy of the Vatican

Hungary

H.E. Mr. Laszlo Kadar
Embassy of Hungary

Indonesia

H.E. Mr. Muhammad H. Adamy
Ambassador
Embassy of Indonesia

Indonesia (continued)

Mr. Firdauzie Dwiandika
Head of Economic Section
Embassy of Indonesia

Italy

Mr. Diego Brasioli
First Secretary
Embassy of Italy

Mr. Raffaelo De Benedictis
Second Secretary
Embassy of Italy

Morocco

Mr. Mohammad Echrigui
First Secretary
Embassy of Morocco

Poland

Mr. Edmund Pawlak
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Poland

Republic of Korea

Mr. Soo Gil Park
Counsellor
Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. Jung Il Oh
Ambassador
Embassy of Korea

Mr. Dong Eok Kim
Counsellor
Embassy of Korea

Republic of Korea (continued)

Mr. Won Kun Whang
Director of Middle East Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Romania

Mr. George Bogdan
Second Secretary
Embassy of Romania

Russian Federation

H.E. Mr. Alexander Saltanov
Ambassador
Embassy of the Russian Federation

Mr. Azamat Koulmoukhametov
Counsellor
Embassy of the Russian Federation

Mr. Aidar Aganine
Attaché
Embassy of the Russian Federation

South Africa

Ms. Hanlie Booysen
Third Secretary
Embassy of South Africa

Spain

H.E. Mr. Juan Manuel Cabrera
Ambassador
Embassy of Spain

Mr. Gustavo de Aristegue
Embassy of Spain

Sudan

Mr. Idriss Mohammad Abdel Gadir
Counsellor
Embassy of Sudan

Sweden

Mrs. Ann Kask
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Sweden

Turkey

Mr. Turgay Demir
Deputy Economic and Commercial Counselor
Embassy of Turkey

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Mr. Martin Cronin
Second Secretary
Embassy of the United Kingdom

Yugoslavia

Mr. Zoran Vejnovic
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Yugoslavia
Damascus

C. United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other organizations in the United Nations system

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Mr. Pin-Suan Phang
Senior Economic Affairs Officer

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Mr. Sadik Rasheed
Director, Division of Public Administration,
Human Resources and Social Development

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr. Sami J. Sunna
Representative

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Mr. Yousef Qaryouti
Member of the Multidisciplinary Group

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Mr. Saadi N. Al-Jeboori
Head of Arab States Unit
Telecommunication Development Bureau
Geneva

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Mr. Javier de Riedmatten
Representative

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Mr. Ali Shabou
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the
United Nations Habitat II

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Mr. Qais G. Noaman
Chief, Regional Programmes Division
Regional Bureau for Arab States
UNDP, New York

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Mr. Salih M. Osman
Regional Director
Regional Office
Bahrain

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Mr. Wafa Kamel
Head, Arab Countries Programmes

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Mr. Atef Khalifa
Director, CST Regional Office

United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM)

Mr. John F. Scott
Adviser

World Health Organization (WHO)

Mr. Imtiaz Mohammed
Representative

D. GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)

Mr. Mohammad bin Najib El-Khash
Director-General

Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO)

Mr. Mohamed Karbid
Secretary-General

Mr. Fuad Khaleel Al-Lahham
Director of the Office of Planning and Follow-up

Arab Labour Organization (ALO)

Mr. Mohammad Amine Fares
Counsellor

Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)

Mr. Abdel-Hamid Al-Kayed
Regional Director

Association of the Islamic World

Mr. Hussein Daifallah Al-Maliki
Director of Amman Office

Demographic Centre

Mr. Salah al-Din Mahmoud Kamel
Secretary-General

General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries

Mr. Burhan R.S. Dajani
Secretary-General

Gulf Cooperation Council

Mr. Ali S. Al-Atar
Economist

Islamic Development Bank

Mr. Mohammad Saeed Taher
Economist

League of Arab States

Mr. Kamal Sinada
Director, Department of Economic Relations and Joint Action

Union of Arab Banks

Mr. Adnan Al-Hindi
General Secretary

Union of Arab Universities

Mr. Ibrahim Khawja
Secretary-General

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION AT ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION

Symbol	Agenda item	Title
E/ESCWA/17/L.1/Rev.1	3	Provisional agenda
E/ESCWA/17/2	4	Organization of work
E/ESCWA/17/3	5	Invitation to States Members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies not members of the Commission to participate in a consultative capacity in the seventeenth session of the commission
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)	6 (a)	Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission: progress made in the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.1	6 (a)	Progress of implementation of the Arab Declaration on Environment and Development and Future Prospects
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.2	6 (a)	Assistance to existing industries
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.3	6 (a)	Cooperation among ESCWA countries in the field of shared water resources
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.4	6 (a)	Establishment of a regional committee on natural resources
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.5	6 (a)	Progress achieved in the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan

Symbol	Agenda item	Title
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.6	6 (a)	Progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action for the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy during the last decade
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.7	6 (a)	Promotion of selected renewable energy projects
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.8	6 (a)	Promotion of cooperation among ESCWA countries for the setting up of a centre for space science and technology education
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.9	6 (a)	Support for technical assistance projects for the development of women
E/ESCWA/17/4(Part I)/Add.10	6 (a)	Progress made in the ESCWA plan to implement Agenda 21 in the region, for submission to the Commission on Sustainable Development
E/ESCWA/17/4/(Part II)	6 (a)	Technical cooperation activities
	6 (b)	Follow-up action on the resolutions of the Commission adopted at its sixteenth session
E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.1	6 (b)	(i) Resolution 179 (XVI) on setting up a statistics committee within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.2	6 (b)	(ii) Resolution 180 (XVI) on regional cooperation and coordination in the field of environment and sustainable development
E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.3	6 (b)	(iii) Resolution 181 (XVI) on support for the Regional Household Survey Project in the ESCWA countries

Symbol	Agenda item	Title
E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.4	6 (b)	(iv) Resolution 182 (XVI) on the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Decade for Western Asia (1994-2003)
E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.5	6 (b)	(v) Resolution 183 (XVI) on the reconstruction of Lebanon
E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.6	6 (b)	(vi) Resolution 184 (XVI) on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people in the occupied Palestinian territories
E/ESCWA/17/5/Add.7	6 (b)	(vii) Resolution 185 (XVI) on the economic and social conditions of the Syrian people under Israeli occupation in the occupied Syrian Golan
E/ESCWA/17/6	6 (c)	Follow-up action at the regional level on United Nations world conferences and ESCWA regional meetings
E/ESCWA/17/7	6 (d)	Cooperation among developing countries and regional organizations
E/ESCWA/17/8(Add.1-3)	7	Financial status of the Commission's programmes
E/ESCWA/17/9(Rev.1)	8	Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: restructuring of ESCWA programmes
E/ESCWA/17/10	9	Revised medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (second revision)
E/ESCWA/17/11	10	Draft revision of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1994-1995

Symbol	Agenda item	Title
E/ESCWA/17/12	11	Proposed outline of the programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1996-1997
E/ESCWA/17/13	12	Designation of sectoral focal points
E/ESCWA/17/14	13	Report of the Executive Secretary submitted pursuant to resolution 192 (XVI) on the permanent headquarters of the Commission
E/ESCWA/17/15	14	Current issues of importance to the ESCWA region: methods of strengthening mechanisms and techniques of activating intraregional trade among the States members of the Commission
E/ESCWA/17/16	15	Report of the Technical Committee on the work of its eighth session
E/ESCWA/17/17	16	Date, venue and provisional agenda of the eighteenth session of the Commission
E/ESCWA/17/18	18	Adoption of the report of the Commission on its seventeenth session

Annex III

LIST OF PRINCIPAL PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY THE COMMISSION SINCE ITS SIXTEENTH SESSION

Symbol	Title
E/ESCWA/AGR/1993/2	National Farm Data Handbook: Jordan
E/ESCWA/AGR/1993/13	The National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sultanate of Oman
E/ESCWA/AGR/1993/16	National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the United Arab Emirates
E/ESCWA/AGR/1993/8	Desertification Control Project: Integrated Natural Resource Management for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Bahrain
E/ESCWA/AGR/1992/13	Eradication of Illicit Crops: Rehabilitation of the Agricultural Sector in Lebanon
E/ESCWA/AGR/1993/9	Rehabilitation of the Agricultural Sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territories
E/ESCWA/SED/1993/14	Structural Adjustment and Reform Policies in Jordan: Economic and Social Implications
E/ESCWA/DPD/1992/7	Review and Analysis of the Progress made by the Republic of Yemen in the Implementation of the New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s
E/ESCWA/SED/1993/19	A Conceptual and Methodological Framework for Poverty Alleviation in the ESCWA region
E/ESCWA/DPD/1992/11	The Impact of the Gulf Crisis on the Economies of Western Asia
E/ESCWA/HS/1992/1	Appropriate Human Settlements Planning in the ESCWA Region: The Role of Geographic Information Systems in Planning
E/ESCWA/HS/1993/1	Human Settlements Situation in the ESCWA Region: Development Trends in the Housing Sector during the Last Two Decades

Symbol	Title
E/ESCWA/HS/1993/5	Guidelines for Appropriate Planning and Design Standards in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/HS/1993/4	Proceedings of the Symposium on Low-cost Housing in the Arab Region
E/ESCWA/HS/1992/2	Housing Finance in the ESCWA Region: Institutions and Procedures
E/ESCWA/ID/1993/11	Review of Recent Development of Manufacturing Activities and Prospects in the ESCWA Region, 1993
E/ESCWA/ID/1992/1	Promotion of Entrepreneurship in Small-scale Industrial Enterprises
E/ESCWA/ID/1992/5	Final Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Interconnection Technologies for Electronics Industries in the Arab Countries
E/ESCWA/ID/1992/14	Final Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Issues in Managing Technological Change within the Context of Arab Electronics Firms and Selected Proceedings
E/ESCWA/ID/1992/13	Development of Food-processing Equipment: Pre-feasibility Study for Manufacturing Grain-milling Equipment in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/ID/1993/4	Regional Survey of Production and Consumption of Substances Harmful to the Ozone Layer in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/ID/1992/15	Review of Recent Developments in the Manufacturing Sector of the ESCWA Region
1992 issue (E/ESCWA/DPD/1992/10) 1993 issue (E/ESCWA/SED/1993/15)	Analytical Review of Developments and Issues in the External Trade and Payments Situation of Countries of Western Asia
E/ESCWA/DPD/1993/10	The Export Finance Mechanisms in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/SED/1993/20	The Link between Production Policies and Export Activity in the Region
E/ESCWA/NR/1993/21	Water Resources Planning, Management, Use and Conservation in the ESCWA Region

Symbol	Title
E/ESCWA/NR/1993/19	Operation and Maintenance of Dams in Selected Member Countries in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/NR/1993/13	Down-stream Phosphate Industries and their Prospects in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/NR/1993/20	Planning and Design of an ESCWA Water Resources Database (EWDB)
E/ESCWA/NR/1993/7	Survey of Water Resources Activities in the ESCWA Region, 1992
E/ESCWA/ENR/1992/22	Survey and Assessment of Energy-related Activities in the ESCWA Region, 1990-1991
E/ESCWA/NR/1993/10	Survey and Assessment of Energy-related Activities in the ESCWA Region, 1992
E/ESCWA/ENR/1992/20	Bulletin of Energy Data for the ESCWA Region, 1991
E/ESCWA/ENR/1993/9	Optimization of Energy Use in Oil-Refining (Case-studies of Al-Zarqa Oil Refinery, Jordan, and Aden Oil Refinery, Yemen)
E/ESCWA/ENR/1992/19	Proceedings of the Interregional Symposium on Gas Development and Market Prospects by the Year 2000 and Beyond
E/ESCWA/POP/1993/12	Demographic and Related Socio-economic Data Sheets for Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, as Assessed in 1992
E/ESCWA/SD/1993/2	Return Migration: Profiles, Impact and Absorption in Home Countries
E/ESCWA/POP/1993/3	Bibliography of Population Literature in the Arab World
E/ESCWA/POP/1992/6	Population Situation in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/POP/1993/4	Population Spatial Distribution
1992 Issue (E/ESCWA/DPD/1992/6) 1993 Issue (E/ESCWA/DPD/1993/8)	Review of Developments and Trends in the Monetary and Financial Sectors in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/DPD/1993/6	Finance and Development in the ESCWA Region

Symbol	Title
E/ESCWA/SED/1993/18	Management and Organization of Government in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/DPD/1992/12	Financial Resources Availability and Management in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/ID/1992/16	The Implications of New and Advanced Materials Technologies for the Development of the ESCWA Countries
E/ESCWA/NR/1993/15	The Integration of Science and Technology in the Development Planning and Management Process in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/SD/1993/4	Survey of Social Trends and Indicators in Countries of the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/SD/1992/13	Assessment of the Implementation of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons in the ESCWA Region at the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and Agenda for Future Action
E/ESCWA/SD/1992/5	The Introduction, Adaptation and Transfer of New, Appropriate Technologies for Disabled Persons in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/SD/1992/12	Marginalized Youth Groups and Measures to Promote their Participation in Development
E/ESCWA/SD/1993/3	Impact of Drug Abuse Among Youth in the ESCWA Region: Approaches to Social Reintegration
E/ESCWA/STAT/1992/18	Statistical Abstract of the Region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: 1981-1990
E/ESCWA/TCD/1993/15	Maritime Transport Statistics in the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/TCD/1992/14	Privatization and Deregulation of Selected Transport Modes
E/ESCWA/TCD/1992/15	Subsidy in the Transport Sector of the ESCWA Region
E/ESCWA/TCD/1993/14	Coordination of Investments in the Transport Sector

Symbol	Title
E/ESCWA/TCD/1993/13	Utilization of Computer Technology in Transport Management in the ESCWA Region, with Special Reference to Railways
E/ESCWA/TCD/1992/16	Training Needs for Transport Authorities in Western Asia
E/ESCWA/TCD/1993/17	Maritime Hydrographic Surveying and Maintenance of Hydrographic Surveying Equipment in ESCWA Countries
_____	Agriculture and Development in Western Asia, Nos. 14 and 15
_____	Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region, 1991
_____	Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region, 1992
_____	Population Bulletin of ESCWA, Nos. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40
_____	National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region Bulletin, Nos. 12 and 13
_____	External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region, No 6
_____	Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for the Arab Countries, No. 1
_____	Prices and Financial Statistics in the ESCWA Region, No. 12
_____	Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators, No. 3
_____	Transport Bulletin Nos. 3 and 4

Annex IV

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 192 (XVI) ON THE PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMISSION*

* Originally issued as E/ESCWA/17/14 and annexed to the present report upon the decision of the Commission (see paragraph 135).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the resolution of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) 192 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 regarding the permanent headquarters of the Commission. In its resolution, the Commission requested "the Executive Secretary of the Commission to take the necessary measures to study the request received from the Government of Lebanon and that received from the Jordanian Government, as well as any other requests that may be received from any member State of the Commission regarding the transfer and hosting of the permanent headquarters of the Commission". The Commission further requested the Executive Secretary to "submit to the Commission, at its special session, a detailed report on the contacts which he made with regard to the Commission's permanent headquarters containing an appraisal of the offers made in this respect".

2. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1993/3 of 2 February 1993, reiterated the request of the Commission and, *inter alia,* decided that a special session of the Commission should be held within one year of the date of the adoption of the Council's resolution to discuss the question of the permanent headquarters of the Commission. By September 1993, no written offer to host the permanent headquarters of ESCWA had been received despite several indications of interest from member States. The special session was initially postponed and then cancelled, as it was decided to include the issue of the permanent headquarters as an agenda item for consideration during the seventeenth session.

3. The present report is divided into seven main sections. Section II sets out the background of the question. Sections III and IV relate respectively to basic considerations taken into account by the joint fact-finding mission and to its appraisal of the offers made by the interested Governments. Section V deals with the issue of security, while section VI reviews the financial implications of the selection of each duty station. Section VII contains observations and options that the Commission may wish to consider.

II. BACKGROUND

4. In the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was relocated from its then permanent headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, on a temporary basis, to Amman as of 11 August 1991. In ensuing years, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has extended its unfailing support and cooperation to the Commission, making every effort to facilitate its functioning. Those efforts notwithstanding, the temporary nature of the status of ESCWA in the country and the related uncertainty of its situation continued to be a major impediment to the efficient functioning of the Commission.

5. Pursuant to resolution 192 (XVI) of the Commission and Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/3 cited above, intensive contacts with the member States have been pursued to elicit their views on the question of the permanent headquarters of the Commission. Following these consultations with the member States, the Executive Secretary addressed notes verbales to the three member States that had expressed an interest in hosting the permanent headquarters of the Commission, Lebanon, Jordan and Qatar, soliciting their written and concrete offers. It should be noted that the Government of Iraq reiterated its readiness to continue to host the permanent headquarters of ESCWA. However, as long as sanctions, by virtue of chapter VII of the United

Nations Charter, continued to be applied against Iraq, the offer of the Government of Iraq cannot be considered.

6. To follow up on the preliminary indications of interest, a joint ESCWA secretariat and United Nations Headquarters mission visited Jordan, Lebanon and Qatar from 1 to 8 March 1994 to meet with the competent authorities. A list of representatives of the member States concerned and of the members of the joint fact-finding mission is submitted in appendix I. It should be noted in this respect that the composition of the fact-finding mission had to be altered for the portion of the mission conducted in Lebanon, due to security restrictions currently upheld by the United Nations Security Coordinator with regard to travel to Lebanon by United Nations staff members of United States nationality.

7. As agreed with the respective Governments, the fact-finding mission held consultations with the government officials of Qatar from 1 to 3 March 1994. It further met with Jordanian officials on 5 and 6 March 1994, and with Lebanese officials from 7 to 9 March 1994.

III. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

8. The joint fact-finding mission was instructed to conduct a thorough review of the offers made by the three Governments, and solicit their views on the outstanding issues, taking into consideration various factors involved in the implementation of the resolutions of the Commission and of the Economic and Social Council in the light of standard United Nations practice and requirements for hosting the permanent headquarters of a regional commission.

9. The joint fact-finding mission was instructed in particular to take into consideration the following factors: facilities offered, status of any headquarters agreements with the host country, the local labour market in terms of availability of qualified, bilingual, local support personnel to provide a pool for potential locally recruited support staff, status of the infrastructure in terms primarily of telecommunications and other utilities, public transport, ease and frequency of air connections, international schooling choices, diplomatic representation, cost and availability of living accommodations, and others.

10. Above all, in implementing these instructions, the fact-finding mission was to bear in mind that the security of staff of the Commission and representatives of the member States would eventually be the paramount criterion for determining the host country for the permanent headquarters of ESCWA. Secondly, at a time of unprecedented financial constraints facing the United Nations, it was also of paramount importance to consider the financial implications of the recommendation that would eventually be made by the Commission to the Economic and Social Council concerning the permanent headquarters of ESCWA.

IV. APPRAISAL OF OFFERS

a) *Facilities proposed*

11. All three prospective host Governments have indicated their readiness to provide facilities which would meet the requirements of the Commission for office accommodation and conferences. The Governments of Jordan and Qatar confirmed that they were prepared to construct, at a suitable location, a building that would fully meet the requirements of ESCWA. Until such time as the

permanent facilities are available for occupancy, both Governments agreed to accord adequate temporary facilities for the use of the Commission. The Government of Lebanon proposed to offer an office building in Beirut. This presently unfinished structure was in the construction phase at the time hostilities broke out in the country, and further work on the project was then suspended. The building proposed was inspected by the fact-finding mission and found to be suitable for the work of the Commission, should the construction be completed as agreed.

12. Detailed findings on office accommodations and conference facilities in the three countries are provided in appendix II.

b) *Status of headquarters agreements*

13. Prior to the arrival of the fact-finding mission to the three prospective host countries, copies of a preliminary draft of a headquarters agreement between the United Nations and the host country were provided to them. The draft is based on the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations (chapter XV) and those of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations adopted on 13 February 1946. In accordance with established United Nations practice, the headquarters agreement would normally regulate all relevant legal matters related to the juridical personality of the regional commission, the legal status of its premises, funds, and assets, privileges, immunities, exemptions and other facilities, cooperation with competent authorities of the host country, settlement of disputes and other legal matters.

14. During the fact-finding mission, initial discussions were held with the competent authorities of each prospective host country with regard to the above provisions of the draft agreement. Any decision to establish the permanent seat of the Commission should be contingent upon the successful conclusion by the United Nations and the prospective host Government of a headquarters agreement containing the appropriate legal arrangements.

15. At the time of its relocation in 1991 in Jordan, the Commission had entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Jordan. Owing to the ad hoc nature of the arrangements made, this temporary agreement was inevitably a highly synopsized version of a standard agreement and was entered into at a time when it was believed that ESCWA would remain in Jordan for a limited period of time. Should the Commission decide to select Jordan as its permanent site, a satisfactory headquarters agreement acceptable to the United Nations would have to be concluded. Thus, the existing agreement would have to be subject to further negotiations between the United Nations and the Government of Jordan.

16. In the early 1970s, at the time of the establishment of ECWA in Beirut as a regional commission, a headquarters agreement was concluded with the Government of Lebanon. Should the Commission decide to establish permanent headquarters in Lebanon, a new headquarters agreement would have to be negotiated.

17. It is to be noted that Qatar is not a party to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. However, Qatar accepted, in the agreement with the United Nations concerning assistance by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the Government of Qatar signed on 16 March 1974, that the provisions of the Convention should be applicable to, *inter alia*, the United Nations and its organs. A draft headquarters agreement was provided to the Government of Qatar, which indicated its willingness to negotiate the provisions of such an agreement. The headquarters

agreement would have to make applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, the provisions of the Convention to the Commission, representatives of the member States, and ESCWA officials.

c) *Availability of locally recruited support staff*

18. Based on recent ESCWA experience in the years since its relocation to Amman, the fact-finding mission concluded that in Jordan there was a large supply of highly qualified bilingual personnel to perform the full range of support functions required for the work of the Commission.

19. Based on previous ESCWA experience and the observations of the fact-finding mission to Lebanon, the fact-finding mission concluded that in Lebanon there was a large supply of highly qualified multilingual support personnel to perform the full range of functions required for the work of the Commission.

20. In Qatar, on the basis of discussions, the fact-finding mission came to the conclusion that there was a severe shortage of qualified, bilingual, local support personnel who could be available for recruitment by the United Nations, both in terms of their numbers, specializations and the legal means of employing them. The currently prevailing "sponsorship system", as mandated by the laws of Qatar, would make it extremely difficult to recruit support staff from the local labour market, even should such qualified staff be available. Should it be decided to establish the headquarters of the Commission in Qatar, the Commission would find itself in a position similar to what it faced when it moved its headquarters to Baghdad, in that it would again be required to recruit support staff from outside the country of its headquarters, thus increasing the number of international General Service staff, entailing additional benefits and allowances, which would add significantly to the general costs of the Commission's functioning.

21. In terms of the comparative financial implications of the choice of the permanent headquarters, it should be noted that local salary scales in Jordan are substantially lower than those that would have to be put in place in either Lebanon or Qatar. The one staff-costs-related economic advantage offered by a move to Lebanon would be that the Commission's General Service staff who are Lebanese nationals currently holding international status would revert to locally recruited status, which would result in savings to the Organization.

d) *Infrastructure and living conditions*

22. In the opinion of the fact-finding mission, the infrastructure and living conditions in Jordan currently meet most practical needs of the Commission. The telecommunications, transportation and utilities systems are modern and technically sufficient for the general purposes of ESCWA, although some issues would have to be resolved with the competent Jordanian authorities, *inter alia*, communication rates and rates for electricity and water. Housing is readily available and reasonably priced. There is a wide range of international and local schools to meet the requirements of most ESCWA staff. Food and household items are readily available although imported items tend to be expensive.

23. In Lebanon, because of the damage inflicted on the infrastructure during the years of hostilities, basic facilities such as water, utilities and garbage collection—in spite of a major drive for reconstruction launched by the Lebanese Government—are still lacking. Although major communications improvements are also under way, they fall short of providing the full range of

services to all areas at this time and for the near future. Though it could be expected that with the introduction of recently enacted rental laws, the housing situation could eventually improve, rental apartments are currently hard to find. There is a wide range of international and local schools to meet the requirements of most ESCWA staff. However, owing to the prevailing security situation in Lebanon, some international schools are not operating.

24. In Qatar, most infrastructure requirements, such as utilities, roads, communications and transportation were judged to be adequate. Housing was readily available, as were food and household goods. However, the fact-finding mission noted that there is currently a limited capacity of schools to absorb a significant number of school-age children of ESCWA staff, though the international institutions operating in the country indicated their readiness to increase their capacity to absorb new students given sufficient time.

V. SECURITY

25. Given the Commission's past experience and the need to provide its staff with a stable environment and its programmes and activities with an opportunity to be carried out without disruption, security considerations are paramount in the selection of a permanent headquarters. In this connection, it should be noted that Lebanon north of the Litani river, including Beirut, is in Phase One and Lebanon south of the Litani river is in Phase Three of the system developed by the United Nations to describe security conditions affecting United Nations staff and property. These phases are set in response to varying security conditions. Under Phase One (which is determined locally), all travel to the duty station requires the prior clearance of the official with designated responsibility for security matters. Under Phase Three (which is determined at Headquarters based on a recommendation from the Designated Official), dependants and some internationally recruited non-essential staff are relocated. Security conditions, whether perceived or real, will play an important role in the Commission's ability to attract and retain qualified international staff members and experts, to host international conferences and invite organizations and individuals to participate, and in its overall ability to proceed with implementation if its work programme with minimum disruption. Finally, it should be noted that, owing to security restrictions, travel to or residence in Lebanon is at this time prohibited for United States nationals and a number of permanent staff of the Commission are nationals of the United States.

VI. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

26. In order to apprise the Commission of the financial implications of a decision to be made by the Commission with regard to the options presented in the concluding section of the present report, in appendix III, the Controller of the United Nations provides summary indicative information on estimates relating to:

(a) One-time costs related to the move itself, if necessary, to Qatar and Lebanon respectively, such as packing, moving, travel, DSA (daily subsistence allowance), relocation allowances, removal costs, termination indemnities, and other related costs, if payable;

(b) Overall common staff costs, levels of DSA and other indicators that permit a comparison by the prospective host country of the annual cost of running the duty station in each country.

VII. SUMMARY CONSIDERATIONS

27. In reviewing the offers made by the Governments concerned, the paramount objective was to ensure that the ability of the Commission to carry out its tasks, as mandated by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, would not be impaired and that the Commission could carry out its work programme with maximum efficiency.

28. The results of the appraisal requested by the Commission at its sixteenth session are summarized in the comparative table below.

	JORDAN	LEBANON	QATAR
Facilities, offices	Written intent to provide adequate facilities. Temporary building proposed for use during construction.	Specific building proposed. The construction will have to be completed.	Written intent to provide adequate facilities. Temporary building proposed for use during construction.
Conference facilities	Use of existing cultural centre.	Facilities to be housed in the proposed structure.	Use of existing convention centre.
Headquarters agreements	To be negotiated. A party to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations	To be negotiated. A party to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations	To be negotiated. Not a party to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations
Availability of local staff	Meets requirements.	Meets requirements.	Limited availability. Terms of employment subject to local sponsorship system.
Security conditions	No known constraints.	Beirut in Phase 1. South in Phase 3. Some staff and representatives may be precluded from moving and/or travelling to Lebanon.	No known constraints.
Communications	Meets requirements.	Under reconstruction.	Meets requirements.
Air transport	Direct flights available.	Direct flights available.	Few direct flights available.
Diplomatic missions	Meets requirements.	Meets requirements.	Meets requirements.
Utilities	Meets requirements.	Under reconstruction.	Meets requirements.
Office furniture and equipment	Available.	Available.	Available.
Living accommodations	Available.	Somewhat limited availability.	Available.
Schools	Available.	Available, but some international schools are not currently operating.	Capacity needs to be increased.

29. The two basic options that the member States of ESCWA may wish to consider at this stage can be summarized as follows:

Option A: The Commission at this session would decide that the appraisal presented herewith provides sufficient information on which to base a final recommendation to the Economic and Social Council on the selection of the permanent headquarters for ESCWA from the list of member States that had expressed their readiness to host the Commission. Under this option, the United Nations would approach the Government of the selected member State in order to resolve all outstanding issues and negotiate a headquarters agreement, as well as to negotiate a possible timetable and modalities of the Commission's relocation, if it became necessary. The appropriate recommendation would then be made to the Economic and Social Council.

Option B: The Commission would decide that the appraisal of the offers received and other external factors do not provide a sufficient basis for a final decision to be made at this time on the selection of the permanent headquarters. Under this option, the United Nations would approach the Government of Jordan seeking to extend and improve the present arrangements, preferably for two years, launch an appeal to the member States soliciting new offers for hosting the headquarters of the Commission, and present a detailed appraisal of the new offers, if received, at the next session of the Commission.

30. In conclusion, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Executive Secretary would like to reiterate his deep appreciation to all Governments that have expressed their readiness to host the permanent headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and pay a special tribute to the Government of Jordan for its continued support and cooperation.

Appendix I

LIST OF OFFICIALS CONSULTED

JORDAN

Mr. Nayeff Al-Hadeed, Secretary-General
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Nabil Talhouni, Ambassador
Director of International and Regional Organizations Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Mohammad T. Khalidi, Legal Expert
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Basil
Engineer, Rama Building

LEBANON

Mr. Fares Bouez
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Zafer Al Hassan
General Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. George Siam
Ambassador
Head of International Organizations Department

Ms. Layla Chehab
Department of International Organizations

Mr. Aziz Azzi
Department of International Organizations

H.E. Mr. William Habib
Ambassador
Embassy of Lebanon in Jordan

Mr. Nouhad Baroudi
Mr. George Maroun
Office of the Department and Reconstruction of Lebanon

Mr. Hendrik van der Kloet
Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme

Mr. Christian de Clerq
Special Assistant to the Resident Representative

QATAR

H.E. Mr. Abdul Rahman Bin Al-Attiyah
Ambassador
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ali Abdel Aziz Al-Kawari
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ahmad Al-Mulla, Chief of Protocol
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Youssef Kamal, Under-Secretary
Ministry of Finance, Economy and Commerce

Mr. Ali H. Al-Khalaf, Director
Ministry of Finance, Economy and Commerce

Mr. Fawzi El-Ibrashi, Legal Expert
Ministry of Finance, Economy and Commerce

Mr. Fouad Mohammad, Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme

Ms. Sally Matthew, Senior Secretary
United Nations Development Programme

COMPOSITION OF THE MISSION TEAM

The members of the fact-finding mission were the following:

Chief, Division of Administration, ESCWA
Chairman, ESCWA Staff Council
Secretary of the Commission, ESCWA
Chief, Budget and Finance Section, ESCWA
Legal Officer, Office of Legal Affairs, UNHQ
Officer-in-Charge, General Services Section, ESCWA
Vice-Chairman, ESCWA Staff Council
Construction Engineer, Office of General Services, UNHQ

Appendix II

I. MISSION TO JORDAN

1. Office accommodation. The building offered initially, the Rama Building, was discussed in the first meetings with government officials. Upon visiting the building and reviewing the available areas, it was found that the building had 10,200 m² gross area, of which 5,200 m² was office space (day-lit) and 3,000 m² special use areas. Since the ESCWA requirement is 14,100 m² of office and special use areas, the deficit is 5,900 m². During the team's meetings with government officials, the Government agreed to undertake the full renovation of the proposed facility. After the figure of the ESCWA total requirements had been given, government officials identified a second building in close proximity to the first to be offered together with the Rama Building to be used as a temporary facility.

2. It was indicated that the actual net figure for office and special use areas of 14,100 m² with a suggested service area (i.e., toilets, stairwells) of approximately 7,600 m² for a total of 21,700 m² would be utilized in the initiation of a ministerial review of an alternative proposal for a permanent site for ESCWA at a prime location.

3. Conference facilities. The Government proposes that ESCWA utilize the existing Royal Cultural Centre as its conference facility, rather than constructing a completely new facility. The Cultural Centre has been used by ESCWA in the past and is suitable for specific types of meetings. Conference facilities in local hotels could also be used. The Government should be encouraged to subsidize or provide conference facilities for free when required by ESCWA.

II. MISSION TO LEBANON

4. Office accommodation. The building offered by the Government, El-Murr Tower, was built in 1975 up to the full height as a shell, when the construction was suspended because of the hostilities. The enclosing and finishing of the building are at this time awaiting further financing.

5. The site visit of limited floors of the building and subsequent study of the pamphlet of the El-Murr Tower show that the total gross area of 19,180 m² could yield only approximately 13,000 m² of usable area. Since the ESCWA requirement is 14,100 m² of office and special use area, the net deficit is 1,100 m². A further study will be required once the detailed plans of the facility are provided by the Government to assess all areas, since at this time, as indicated above, the first take-off was done on the basis of a pamphlet not actual measurements or visits.

6. The mission determined that the office accommodations could be sufficient to accommodate ESCWA. However, it was envisaged that the common use areas (including cafeteria, banking facilities, mail and pouch, and conference facilities) could be made available to all United Nations agencies operating in Beirut. The National Council of Reconstruction and Development was receptive to the view expressed by the mission that additional office areas could be made available to accommodate other United Nations bodies and agencies stationed in Beirut.

7. From discussions with government officials, it was understood that the proposed building would be in a "move-in" condition and free of rent and that major maintenance issues could be discussed at a later date.

8. Conference facilities. In the offered building, on a sub-level floor, in a movie theatre area, a large and a small conference room could be established. The envisaged area is double height and has all the required and necessary exits. A row of interpretation booths could also be built. Additionally, the Government offered the usage of the International Congress Centre for major conferences.

III. MISSION TO QATAR

9. Office accommodation. During the team's meetings with government officials, the Government provided further details regarding the temporary facility, Al-Attiyya Building. At the same time, the Government advised that ESCWA might find this facility acceptable as a permanent site. The mission agreed to inspect the site with this view in mind. The building is composed of two office towers, one comprising 9 storeys and the second, 11 storeys. After a thorough inspection, it was decided that the building requires a major renovation, including: changing from convector units to a central air-conditioning system; installing a second egress staircase to fulfil fire safety standards; reinstall cafeteria including kitchen facilities; and rewire and relamp the building for modern office usage (i.e., computer installation). Primarily the mission noted that in the twin towers 7,900 m² of day-lit office space and 3,900 m² of special use areas (i.e., file and copy rooms) are available. Therefore the net available area would be 11,800 m². The gross area, including parking lots for 40-50 cars and service areas on all floors, was 22,900 m². Since the required office and special use areas indicated in the stated requirements of ESCWA totalled 14,100 m², the building would suffice only as temporary housing of the Commission.

10. Upon learning that the temporary facility was not sufficient to house the Commission on a permanent basis, the government officials indicated that Qatar was prepared to plan and construct a new facility. The location of the facility would most likely be along the waterfront area in a favourable location. It was mentioned in the discussions with the government officials that a site near the Sheraton Doha Convention facilities would be preferable for the convenient use of the conference facilities. The planning for the new building would be coordinated with the Qatar government officials and the United Nations in order to meet fully the United Nations requirements.

11. Conference facilities. The Government proposes that ESCWA utilize the Sheraton Doha Convention facilities, rather than constructing completely new facilities. The convention centre was inspected by the mission members and found to be more than adequate in all respects. The Government should be encouraged to subsidize or provide for free this facility when required by ESCWA.

Appendix III

MOVING AND ANNUAL STAFF COSTS
(In millions of United States dollars)

	Amman	Beirut	Doha
Moving costs	-	4.5	4.3
Annual staff costs	16.4	17.5	20.4

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